

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, U.K. (N.I.)

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO IRA CEASEFIRE EXTENSION

1. SUMMARY: IRA PROLONGATION HOLIDAY CEASEFIRE UNTIL MIDNIGHT JAN. 16 HAS BROUGHT RELIEF TO ULSTER POPULACE AND HOSTILE SUSPICION FROM LOYALISTS. RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTIES ALL OPPOSE SECRET OR OTHER NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRA AND MILITANT LOYALISTS ESCHEW CONCILIATION IN FAVOR VICTORY OVER PROVISIONALS. THERE ABIDING LOYALIST SUSPICION THAT IRA MOTIVE IN CALLING CEASEFIRE WAS ORGANIZATIONAL WEAKNESS. FRAGILE TEMPORARY PEACE SUSCEPTIBLE TO DISRUPTION BY ACTIONS PARAMILITARY PROTESTANT FRINGE ELEMENTS. END SUMMARY.

2. REACTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND TO THE JAN. 2 ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE PROVISIONAL IRA THAT THE 11 DAY UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE DUE TO EXPIRE AT MIDNIGHT WAS EXTENDED FOR FOURTEEN DAYS TO JAN. 16 RANGED FROM PALPABLE RELIEF IN THE CITIZENRY TO SUSPICION AND HOSTILITY AMONG LOYALIST LEADERS. THE RELIEF WAS APPARENT IN THE PREVAILING ATMOSPHERE IN DOWNTOWN BELFAST AS THOUSANDS OF SHOPPERS SOUGHT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SEASONAL SALES. THE SUSPICION WAS VOICED BY SPOKESMEN FOR THE ORANGE ORDER, THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY (DUP), THE OFFICIAL UNIONISTS

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AND BY THE LEADER OF THE VANGUARD PARTY (VUP) M.P. WILLIAM CRAIG.

LOYALIST APPREHENSIONS WERE FORMALIZED IN A LETTER TO PROMINENT CHURCH LEADERS FROM THE LOYALIST UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION, THE UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION, WHICH SOUGHT "CLARIFICATION OF A FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE". THIS PRINCIPLE MAY BE THAT THE CHURCHMEN WILL NOT RPT NOT ACT AS INTERMEDIARIES IN SECRET NEGOTIATIONS AFFECTING THE POLITICAL FUTURE OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

3. ULSTER POPULACE OBVIOUSLY GRATEFUL FOR ANY RESPITE FROM VIOLENCE BUT THERE DISAPPOINTMENT AMONG MODERATE POLITICIANS THAT CEASEFIRE PROLONGATION IS ONLY FOR 14 DAY PERIOD AND THAT IRA DEMANDING "A SATISFACTORY REPLY TO THE IRA PEACE PROPOSALS" AND "SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS" TOWARD POSITIVE RESULTS WITHIN THIS PERIOD IN ORDER AVERT RESUMPTION HOSTILITIES. NATURE THESE PEACE PROPOSALS OR WHAT CONSTITUTES REQUIRED "SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS" NOT RPT NOT PRECISELY KNOWN PUBLICLY HERE. THERE CLUES TO PROPOSALS IN TELEVISION STATEMENT BY PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN NORTHERN ORGANIZER SEAMUS LOUGHRAN JAN. 2 THAT SECSTATE MERLYN REES MUST BEGIN NEGOTIATE ON ONE OR "ALL FOUR" ISSUES. (THESE IMMEDIATE ISSUES BELIEVE TO BE: (A) IMPROVED MEANS OF COMMUNICATION (B) FEWER TROOPS IN REPUBLICAN AREAS (C) MORE RELEASES FROM DETENTION (D) FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT FOR MEMBERS PROVISIONAL IRA. SINN FEIN DEPUTY LEADER MAIRE DRUMM IN TELEVISION INTERVIEW DEC. 31 GAVE HINT THAT SECSTATE COULD DEMONSTRATE FURTHER WILLINGNESS EXPLORE WAYS TO PEACE BY RELEASE SEVERAL HARD-CORD INTERNEES HELD SINCE BEGINNING DETENTION 1971.

4. POLITICAL GROUPS NORTHERN IRELAND UNANIMOUSLY OPPOSED TO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN HMG AND IRA. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY M.P. GERARD FITT INSISTENT THAT ELECTED ASSEMBLY AND WESTMINSTER REPRESENTATIVES MUST PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS. ALLIANCE PARTY POSITION IS THAT MEETING ALL LEGAL PARTIES SHOULD DISCUSS SITUATION. VANGUARD AND DEMOCRATIC UNIONISTS AND FAULKNER UNIONIST PARTY NORTHERN IRELAND REJECT POSSIBILITY THAT POLITICAL SOLUTION CAN BE SOUGHT THROUGH DEALING WITH TERRORISTS. MOST ULSTER POLITICIANS EQUATE PROVISIONAL IRA AND PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN. VUP AND DUP HAVE CALLED FOR VICTORY RATHER THAN CONCILIATION. THESE GROUPS MOST VOCIFEROUS IN ADVANCING PERSISTENT VIEW THAT IRA CEASEFIRE CALLED BECAUSE OF IRA WEAKNESS AND IRA NECESSITY REGROUP AND ACQUIRE SUPPLIES AND MEN. GRAIG SEES RESUMPTION TERRORISM INEVITAIBLE AS SOON AS PROVISIONALS UNCLASSIFIED

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CAPABLE. MANY LOYALISTS BELIEVE RELEASE DETAINEES WILL RESTORE TO IRA LEADERSHIP AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE ESSENTIAL FOR CONTINUATION HOSTILITIES. IMMEDIATE DANGER HERE IS THAT PROTESTANT PARA-MILITARY GROUPS, ESPECIALLY FRINGE, ELEMENTS OR INDIVIDUALS, COULD DISRUPT CEASEFIRE BY SECTARIAN ASSASSINATION OR BOMBING. THERE ONE UNEXPLAINED BOMB INCIDENT AT CATHOLIC-OWNED PUB SOUTH ARMAGH EVENING JAN. 2. SPICER

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